

ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL  
ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
Called Meeting – May 20, 2003 – 5:30 p.m.  
Linda N. Gilstrap, Clerk to Council

AMENDED  
M I N U T E S

All area newspapers, radio stations and television stations were informed of this meeting in compliance with guidelines set forth in the *Freedom of Information Act*.

PRESENT

Chairman William C. Dees – District #6, Presiding  
G. Fred Tolly – District #1  
Gracie S. Floyd - District #2  
Vice Chairman Larry E. Greer – District #3  
Clint Wright – District #4  
Mike Holden – District #5  
M. Cindy Wilson – District #7  
Joey Preston – Administrator  
Tom Martin – County Attorney  
Linda N. Gilstrap – Clerk to Council  
Tammie Shealy - Deputy Clerk to Council

*(During times of discussion and presentations the minutes are condensed and paraphrased.)*

The called meeting of the Anderson County Council convened in the Council Chambers of the Historic Courthouse on Tuesday, May 20, 2003 at 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Dees called the meeting to order and stated the reason of the called meeting was pursuant to Section 6-1-320, South Carolina Code, 1976, as revised, for the sole purpose of giving third reading consideration and approval to Anderson County Ordinance #2003-016, the Anderson County Budget Ordinance for 2003-2004, including providing for such override and exception to that certain millage rate limitation provided in such Section 6-1-320, as may be required to meet the revenue requirements of such budget ordinance, due to loss of revenue and revenue sources created by, inter alia, state law and decreases in state funding.

Ms. Gracie S. Floyd gave the invocation and everyone stood and pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

The meeting began with the Citizen Comments and the following citizens spoke: Mr. Bill Houser read the following prepared statement. "These comments are being addressed to the County Council members and to Mr. Preston, The County Administrator. Thank you for the opportunity to present them. You all have received our letter. Most of you seem to agree that 50, 60, 70, and even higher percent tax increases are unreasonable. It is our understanding that you plan to do something about this. The County anticipates a reduction in revenue. You are facing what almost every retiree experiences. When income goes down, you spend less. We retired folks have learned to live with it. The county must do the same. County revenues will rise again as soon as the economy improves. Retirees are stuck with it. I have in earlier years had responsibility for multi-million dollar budgets. I had been forced on two occasions to cut the budget by up to 20 percent. Those companies survived. A good administrator can do this----adjust for decreased income and still continue to function. We all have faith in you all----that you will be faithful stewards of whatever income is available." Mr. Fred Medford said that he has a mobile home that he gave \$5,000 for and now is appraised at 411,000 and he wants to sell out to the County. He said that the value should be going down instead of up. Mr. Carl Stone responded to a statement at the last budget hearing that the new Library had over 300 lights and that is true. There are over 50 different kinds. At the Greenville Street Library there were two large light ceilings. The adult side had 629 lights and the children's side had approximately 1/2 that amount. He said that

there were approximately 1,000 lights in the building. He said during the time they occupied the Greenville Street building it was a constant burdened keeping the lights replaced and they felt that in the new building it is a much better deal for the employees and the County. Ms. Pat Hasenfus a resident of Anderson County asked if the budget as it is being put together if the County needs to keep the windfall – what will happen when people go in to have their assessment lowered? How will the budget be met? Mr. Fran Shirley of Council District 4 and a member of the Library board thanked council for keeping the Library's allocation in the budget. Mr. Charles Crowe spoke on behalf of retired senior citizens of Anderson County. He said that many seniors were under the \$50,000 Homestead exemptions and now they may be in the \$80,000 plus category. He requested that council refer the budget back to the Administrator to bring back without a tax increase. Mr. Thad Godwin, representing Seminole Point property owners association and also speaking as an individual, said that his home is located on an 8-1/2 acre tract and is heavily wooded. The pine beetles hit the pines and it looks like a war zone. He said that it was inconceivable that a site-visit would have increased their property values to the extent that they were increased. Mr. Charles King said the reappraisal is interesting and he was pleased to know that his property is worth as much as it is. He said his descendants would be very happy; however, he questions some of the evaluations on his various pieces of property. Some is not worth near what it is appraised at others may be more. When he saw that the County was not going by the South Carolina law and the county was taking the exception allowed keeping the millage the same. He said that it seems the County has taken on an inordinate amount of debt or obligations to have to increase the County's taxes by 23% in a given year. It seems that the County is trying to copy the Federal Government. The progress the County has made is commendable and he thinks and wonders what will happen with the 23% increase in a given year. He said that he hoped it was used for people in great need. Mr. Tom Clark of the White Plains Community said that the budget is one of the most important issues that Council will face. He said that after talking with people of Williamston, Pelzer and neighborhoods and without exception they have asked him to plead with County Council to reduce spending. Everywhere in the Country people are cutting back. Mr. Phil Peterson a resident of Seminole Point since 1996 said that every year his taxes has gone up – this year 65%. He also said that it was classic for politicians to say, "well, if we have to cut the budget, we'll have to cut services." In Seminole Point there are very few services. No sidewalks, no sewers, no county or city water systems, no streetlights, no fire hydrants, no regular police patrols. He said he couldn't in view of the "lack" of services say that they are getting their money's worth. He asked Council to consider adopting a similar provision such as the State of Florida has because of the action of the Legislature amended the Florida State's Constitution in 1992 stating that the assessments of real property will never be greater than 3% or the Federal government's rate of inflation (whichever is more). Mr. Rodney Sanders from the Rock Mill Community said that they were told last month during discussion of the unpaid vendors that the county was in sound financial condition now today saying that if the County doesn't keep this windfall we're not going to make it. He said his house was up about 22%. At the last reassessment the house was only 5 years old and the price was raised about \$3,000 on market value and that was during good economy. Now during the bad economy his house is worth \$21,000 more. He asked Council that if they intend to keep the "windfall that they include it in their political brochures when they run for re-election. Mr. Edward Evans read a view from an article from the Anderson Independent titled "Reign in Spending-Don't Raise Taxes". He said that Council could control the County's expenditures. Mr. Dan Harvell appearing as a "messenger" of the Anderson County Republican Party said that the party passed a resolution unanimously. He paraphrased the resolution. #1 the Anderson County Republican Party asked that those of the Council who are elected as a republican follow the Republican Creed and Republican principals committed to lower taxes and less intrusive government. The Republican Party expects the

County Council to adhere to the extent of state law that millage rates be rolled back to the proper rating to prevent any increase in taxes due to reassessed property values. Under no circumstances do they want a tax increase of any amount. They called on Council to do the right thing and for republicans, conservative republicans; he said they know what is the right thing to do. Mr. Brooks Brown said he read in the paper where Chairman Dees stated that he would base his vote on conscience rather than public outcry. He said that Mr. Dees was a representative and elected to represent the people of his district. He told Council that they are employees of the County and elected by the citizens and are to listen to the voice of the citizens.

Chairman Dees read the title for third and final reading consideration of Ordinance #2003-016 – an 2003-016 – an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Anderson County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, and to make appropriations for such Anderson County Budgets for County Ordinary Purposes and for other County purposes for which the County may levy a tax other than for Tri-County Technical College purposes; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real estate properties in Anderson County for such County Ordinary Purposes, including sufficient tax to pay the principal and interest on outstanding indebtedness of Anderson County maturing during said fiscal year; to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Anderson County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, and to make appropriations for such Anderson County budgets, for Tri-County Technical College; to provide for the levy of taxes on all personal and real properties in Anderson County on which school taxes may be levied for such Tri-County Technical College purposes; to provide for the levy, assessment and collection of certain other taxes and fees; to provide for the expenditure of said taxes and other revenues coming to the county during said fiscal year; and to provide for other matters relating to Anderson County. Mr. Tolly moved to approve the ordinance as recommended which would set the County levy to fund not exceeding 75 mils. Mr. Holden seconded. Council discussed. Mr. Tom Martin explained the reassessment process and stated that state law mandated it and the County had no choice in the reassessment that is done every five years. Mr. Wright asked that in several months into the new budget that Council be given a quarterly report and he asked that he go on record as that before the millage is set that County Council receive the report as discussed. Ms. Wilson amended the motion to send the budget back to the Administrator to go through and cut further. Mr. Greer seconded the motion. Vote was two in favor (Greer, Wilson) and five opposed (Holden, Tolly, Dees, Wright, Floyd). Motion failed.

Mr. Joey Preston read a letter addressed to the members of the Legislative Delegation explaining all the state cuts and the total loss revenue that the County had experienced.

Ms. Floyd called for the question and Mr. Holden seconded. Vote on the call was five in favor (Holden, Floyd, Dees, Tolly, Wright) and two opposed (Wilson, Greer). Motion carried.

Vote on Ordinance #2003-016 on third and final reading was five in favor (Holden, Dees, Tolly, Floyd and Wright) and two opposed (Greer, Wilson). Motion carried.

The called meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda N. Gilstrap, Clerk to Council

Page 4 - Minutes - Called Meeting of May 20, 2003 - 5:30 p.m.

ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL